

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on Indonesia**

Bearing in mind that Indonesia plays an essential role in ASEAN and is an important factor for regional stability, being convinced that political and economic reforms as well as the consolidation of the political system based on the rule of law is indispensable for the positive development of Indonesia, the EU notes with satisfaction that despite serious political and economic difficulties caused by the unprecedented economic crisis as well as by the legacy of the Suharto regime, the Government of Indonesia has initiated and implemented an impressive range of political, economic, social and legal reforms.

The EU particularly welcomes the steps taken by the Indonesian Government to:

- foster the process of democratisation by introducing new laws on political parties, the election and the role of the Military as well as guaranteeing civil and social liberties,
- stabilise the economy by setting up an agenda of concrete measures in close co-operation with the IMF in the field of macro economic policy as well as structural reform in the corporate and banking sector,
- dampen the negative social effects of the crisis by implementing the social safety net programme covering education employment health and nutrition,
- improve the Human Rights situation as outlined in the National Action Plan on Human Rights. In this context the EU appreciates the ratification of a number of relevant Human Rights instruments as well as the release of a substantial number of political prisoners.

The EU considers these positive developments as a solid basis for a stable process of change of Indonesia's political economic and social system leading to a civic society based on democratic principles, the rule of law and internationally accepted human rights standards. The EU offers Indonesia its full support on this difficult reform path.

In view of the upcoming parliamentary elections of 7 June the EU is prepared to support and contribute to the election process in Indonesia by providing support to the National Plan of Action for Public Education via local NGO's as well as to set up an EU-observer mission under UN-auspices for the election and its preparation phase.

While encouraging Indonesia to further follow its reform path the EU continues to be concerned about the security situation in the country and its handling by the Indonesian security forces.

The recent violent outbreaks in the Moluccas (Ambon) and West-Kalimantan with hundreds of deaths as well as the tense situation in other troubled areas (in particular Aceh and Irian Jaya) call for a new approach of dealing with these incidents.

The EU considers it essential that the delicate ethnic and religious balance of Indonesia is preserved. Acts of violence jeopardising this balance should be dealt with by the security personnel in a way which is in accordance with international human rights standards and with the aim to reduce the existing high level of tension.

The EU therefore calls on all parties concerned to show utmost restraint in the pursuit of their political goals in order to avoid a further increase of tension.

The EU looks forward to further developing its partnership with Indonesia through practical assistance, through dialogue both bilaterally and in multilateral fora, and through high level exchanges.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus and the EFTA countries, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.
